

# The Eclectic Theosophist

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## A MYSTIC REALITY

*Boris de Zirkoff*

The following are extracts from the first article, "Keep the Link Unbroken", in *The Dream That Never Dies*, a collection of editorials and studies by Boris de Zirkoff written over the many years when he was editor of the journal *Theosophia*. —EDS.

It would only be natural to suppose that all schools of esoteric discipline and instruction, in whatever land or race, have had periods of inner strength and periods of temporary weakness, when stresses and tensions, brought about by the inherent flaws in human character, weakened for the time being the tensile strength of that mystic connection with the prime-source of all occult knowledge which H.P. Blavatsky so graphically termed the 'Link'. Apart from any outward manifestation in the actual presence of a living Teacher, such 'link' is a mystic reality within the disciple himself. While greatly helped and sustained by the Teacher, it does not solely depend upon him. It is primarily the student's own inner awareness of spiritual realities; his own ability to rise above the illusions of material existence and synchronize his human consciousness with the vibratory rate of a Higher Consciousness; his capacity to make of himself a relatively open channel for the transmission of a Force flowing from the Occult Hierarchy in which his spiritual consciousness is rooted.

The outward Teacher does not establish the disciple's own inner 'link', though he stands as its noblest symbol, and facilitates the conditions under which such individual 'links' may be established with greater ease. It should also be remembered that genuine esoteric Teachers do not come on their own, looking for possible disciples, but invariably appear in answer to the individual and collective 'call' on the part of would-be disciples, whose condition of growth and state of consciousness make the appearance of a Teacher imperative.

The primary condition necessary for the establishment and the perpetuation of the inner link within the disciple's own consciousness is a life devoted to the spiritual interests of others, wherein

one's own personal advancement, even advancement in spiritual knowledge or attainment, becomes secondary as compared with the existing need for spiritual help in the world at large, and the disciple's endeavor to meet as much of this need as his capacities and abilities permit him to do at any one time. Given this condition and self-forgetfulness in the service of others, the forging of the mystic 'link' with the Brotherhood of Adepts becomes immeasurably easier than it would be under any other circumstances . . .

## THE WINTER SOLSTICE — ITS MEANING

*G. de Purucker*

In 1929 G. de Purucker began a series of public lectures in the Temple at Point Loma on Sunday afternoons to which the general title "Questions We All Ask" was given. In these spontaneous talks he answered the many pressing questions sent in of a general and specific nature regarding Theosophy, its teachings, its way of life. They were published weekly at the time, and later in booklet form, but are now long out of print. The following are closing paragraphs from his talk of December 22, 1929, in response to the question: "Will you tell us something about Christmas from a theosophical standpoint? I understand that you always celebrate Christmas at Point Loma Headquarters. As the Christmas-Festival is essentially a Christian one, how do the members of your Society (which is said to include many non-Christians in the Orient and elsewhere) regard it?" —EDS.

They regard it as Theosophists regard it. The Christmas-Festival is in one sense only, a Christian festival. It is based upon something belonging to the Greek and Roman paganism, which the Christians took over. It is therefore older than Christianity. It is pagan, to use the popular word. The Christians themselves up to the fifth century of the Christian Era did not know (I am speaking of the mass of Christians) exactly when to celebrate the birthday of Jesus called the Christ.

There were at least three dates when commemorative festivals were held in the early Christian era: on December 25th, on January 6th called the Epiphany, and on the 25th of March — practically the time of the spring equinox. Now, all these dates were based

upon astronomical data and facts; and the Christians of about the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era finally chose the date which had been in use for the celebration of the birthday of the Persian god, Mithras — December 25th. Why?

Whether Jesus the Syrian lived or not has nothing to do with the question. If he lived, it matters not on what day of the year he was born; for the commemorative celebration of that birth is really the celebration of a mystical birth, the birth of the god in man, literally. I will tell you what I mean.

The Mysteries of Antiquity were celebrated at various times of the year — in the spring, in the summer-time, in the autumn, and at the winter solstice, on December 21st or 22nd. But the greatest of these mystical celebrations, the greatest of the Mysteries, was that which was celebrated in the winter-time, when the sun had reached his southernmost point, and turning, began his return-journey northwards.

Beginning with the winter solstice, on December 21st, these most sacred of the ancient Mysteries began. Therein were initiated certain men who had been chosen on account of having perfected a certain preliminary period of training: chosen to go through initiatory trials for the purpose of bringing out into manifestation in the man the divine faculties and powers of the inner god.

Two weeks were passed in this cycle of training or of initiation; and on the 6th of January, later called Epiphany (a Greek word which means 'the appearance of a god'), celebrated even today in the Christian Church, on that day came the supreme moment in the ancient crypts of initiation, when the aspirant, having successfully passed through the preliminary trials, was brought face to face with his own inner god.

If he withstood successfully the supreme test, he was suddenly suffused with splendor, with light which shone from him, so that he stood there radiating light like the sun. His face shone brilliantly; back of his head was an aureole of splendor, and he was said to be 'clothed with the sun.' This splendor is the Christ-light, called in the Orient the Buddhic Splendor, and is simply the concentrated spiritual vitality of the human being pouring forth in irradiation. The 'Christ-sun' was born.

I could bring to you proofs from the Greek and Latin literatures — proofs of many kinds — showing you what took place at this most sacred time of the pagan initiatory cycle. On that day was born the Christ, to use the mystical phraseology of the primitive Christians; and using the phraseology of the Greeks and Romans, from whom the Christians adopted and, alas, adapted, the ideas: on that supreme day was born the mystical Apollo — to give the mystical name given to the man so raised; and in the Orient it was said that a Buddha was born . . . .

The Theosophist looks upon this season with reverence and awe, for he knows that in the proper quarter some human being is undergoing the supreme test, and that if successful, if he is 'raised', if he can raise his own personal being into communion with his inner god and hold it there, so that he becomes suffused with the divine splendor, a new Christ is born to the world, a Teacher of forgiveness, of compassion, of almighty love to all that is; and as I, being a Theosophist, would phrase it, a Buddha is born into the world. Hail and revere!

— [Readers interested may also wish to consult the booklets "Clothed with the Sun: The Mystery Tale of Jesus the Avatara", and "The Mahatmas and Genuine Occultism", both by G. de Purucker.—Eds.]

## AND WE QUOTE . . .

### *Outer Rounds and Circulations of the Cosmos*

The Planetary origin of the Monad (soul) and of its faculties was taught by the Gnostics. On its way to the Earth, as on its way back from the Earth, each Soul born in, and from, the 'Boundless Light', had to pass through the seven planetary regions both ways.

— H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 579

### *Plato on the Circulations of the Soul*

And by the circulations of the soul being merged in a profound river and impetuously borne along, we must understand by the river, not the human body alone, but the whole generation (with which we are externally surrounded) through its swift and unstable flowing. For thus, says Proclus, Plato in the *Republic* calls the whole of generated nature the river of Lethe, which contains both Lethe and the meadow of Ate, according to Empedocles; the devouring jaws of matter, the light-hating world, as it is called by the gods; and the winding rivers under which many are drawn down, as the oracles assert. But by the circulations of the soul the cogitative and opinionative powers are signified; the former of which, through the soul's conjunction with the body, is impeded in its energies, and the latter is Titanically torn in pieces under the irrational life.

— Introduction to Plato's *The Timaeus*, 425 (Taylor)

### *The Center of All True Religiousness*

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant

beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of all true religiousness.

— Albert Einstein

### ***The Real Drama of Life***

We should look upon human life as a great drama—a great mystery-drama, filled with limitless possibilities. The kingdom of heaven is within; and so is the kingdom of hell, which is the kingdom of ignorance, of dissatisfaction, of delusion, and of unhappiness. If we wish to help purify the world, purify our nation, our city, and to breathe the sweet air of a new life, we must first allow ourselves to dream of the possibility of it. We must dare to go towards it and become the masters of our own lives. Then we shall have the key to understanding the real drama of life.

— Katherine Tingley: From a talk in the Temple, Point Loma, September 1927

### ***The Universe: A Great Thought***

Today there is a wide measure of agreement . . . that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.

— Sir James Jeans (1877-1946)

### ***"This Complexion of Doubt"***

Indulge not in apprehensions of what evil might happen if things should not go as your worldly wisdom thinks they ought; doubt not, for this complexion of doubt unnerves and pushes back one's progress. To have cheerful confidence and hope is quite another thing from giving way to the fool's blind optimism; the wise man never fights misfortune in advance.

— K. H. in *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 268

### **NOT HERE FOR OUR OWN SAKE**

An important article, titled above, appears in *Theosophy*, September 1984, issued monthly by U.L.T., Los Angeles. "Today," the writer states, "the air is filled with warnings of both historians and ecologists, not the least of which is the recently published volume, *State of the World*, a current report by the Worldwatch Institute on our 'progress toward a sustainable society'. "The present, in short, may be a time for calling for rapid recognition of the wayward course of modern nations and their peoples. Nature herself, in contrast to philosophers and reformers, we might say, is now taking a hand in our education." We give here the article's closing paragraphs. — EDS.

Then, in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge spelled out the occult reading of current history, showing at once the reason for the presence in the world of the Theosophical Movement—the oppor-

tunities for human awakening afforded by a quickening of evolution, and the ground for continuous efforts by students despite the seemingly endless disasters produced by the working out of Karma from the past. Having noted the pervasive influence of the Desire principle in this period of the Fourth Round, he added:

But as Mind is being evolved more and more as we proceed in our course along the line of the race development, there can be perceived underneath in all countries the beginning of the transition from the animal possessed of the germ of real mind to the man of mind complete. This day is therefore known to the Masters, who have given out some of the old truths, as the 'transition period'. Proud science and prouder religion do not admit this, but think we are as we always will be. But believing in his teacher, the theosophist sees all around him the evidence that the race mind is changing by enlargement, that the old days of dogmatism are gone and the 'age of inquiry' has come, that the inquiries will grow louder year by year and the answers be required to satisfy the mind as it grows more and more, until at last, all dogmatism being ended, the race will be ready to face all problems, each man for himself, all working for the good of the whole, and that the end will be the perfecting of those who struggle to overcome the brute.

Are there, then, encouraging signs of a fresh interest in Theosophy, with inquirers increasing in number, and some of them finding inner reasons for joining in the work? The rhythms of growth vary around the world. In some Lodges, the present seems a time of holding fast, while elsewhere there is a noticeable accession of new and younger students. There is the Karma of place along with that of time, with invisible obstacles to cope with as well as beneficent influences. Who, we may well ask, are those who find their way to Theosophical centers and work? Mr. Judge examines this question in principle in his chapter of comment on the chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* devoted to the renunciation of the fruits of action, perhaps the most difficult lesson of all for modern man to learn. "What we are to endeavor to understand," he says, "is how to renounce the fruit of our actions, which is what Krishna means when he tells us to perform actions as a renunciation." It should be born in mind that the manifest growth in human intelligence during the past three or four hundred years has been very largely a development of the logical faculty, bringing the skills of scientific discovery and research, and this has been directed above all toward a precisely opposite goal — getting what we want. Thus the recommendation of renunciation of the fruits of action may seem a complete heresy to the very instinct of the lower mind, so sharpened in its calculating functions by an intensive education of its abilities. Mr. Judge discusses at some length the reasons for the characteristic opposition to Krishna's

teaching in the modern world, then remarks:

These instructions will be very difficult for all who are living for themselves and who have not in some small degree begun to believe that they are not here for their own sake. But when we feel that there is no separation between us and any other creature, and that our Higher Self is leading us through all the experiences of life to the end that we shall recognize the unity of all, then, instead of continually acting contrary to that object of the Higher Self, we try to acquire the right belief and aspiration. Nor need we be deterred, as some are, by the extreme difficulty of eliminating the selfish desire for progress. That will be the task during many lives, and we should begin it voluntarily as soon as it is known, instead of waiting for it to be forced in upon us through suffering and many defeats.

It is of particular interest to note that the metaphysical unity taught in Theosophy—which becomes the rational ground for ethics and universal brotherhood—is now confirmed on the physical plane by students of ecology, who also point to the unity of life. What was Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* but instruction in the law of brotherhood as it applies to the living creatures of all the earth? There is an implicit pantheism in the work of such writers, and little by little it is creating a matrix of thought and feeling that, in the course of years, will be receptive to the more penetrating ethical ideas of the Theosophical Movement, which have the support of a completely logical metaphysics. Mr. Judge's simple phrase, referring to those who have "begun to believe that they are not here for their own sake," gives the heart of the matter when it comes to recruits for the Theosophical Movement. The promise afforded by present changing attitudes in the world lies in exactly this idea. *We are not here for ourselves alone, but to work for the common good.* [italics added]

This is the conception that is gradually seeping into the awareness of the world. The provocation may come from the cries of an outraged Nature, yet there are also awakening intuitions of the mission of the Manasa Putra, the Promethean spirit in man, which come to the surface wherever thoughtful men and women give expression to the needs of the human race. We may note these trends in the work of distinguished individuals, and take heart from them, yet may also realize that a similar motivation, less articulate although not less real, may be the means of drawing a newcomer to a Theosophical meeting. That we are not here for our own sake is the first fundamental of authentic self-knowledge. Finding ways of giving it expression that appeal to the higher mind, which avoid the cliches of popular sentimentality, which become a spur to the essential nobility hidden in the breast of every human being, is first the duty, and then the pleasure, of all true Theosophists.

## COSMIC RHYTHMS IN LOGARITHMS

L. Gordon Plummer

Most of us at some time during our school days approached a new portal of learning with the awesome word *logarithms*. We entered with some trepidation, soon to learn that it had to do with such things as 'The Theory of Exponents'. Surprisingly, we found it was very interesting; then we discovered that it was fun.

We discovered that with logarithms we could do the most amazing things. For instance, if we wanted to multiply two such numbers as 7,392.87 by 44,712, we simply add their logarithms. Then we change their sum to its antilogarithm in which we have the product of the two numbers. And so we found we could multiply, divide, find all sorts of exotic powers and roots of numbers with no effort at all. At least we can now with the sophisticated hand-calculators that every high school student has access to.

Well then, what are logarithms, and why should we be concerned with them just now? We are concerned because not only is the subject of extraordinary interest, but since our universe, we learn, is basically a mathematical environment, we find intriguing lessons that open our eyes to certain cosmic verities touching our relationship with the universe as a whole and to one another as individuals.

Let us take an easy way to present the nature of logarithms.

We all know that  $10 \times 10 = 100$ . We say that  $10^2 = 100$ .

We will now refer to 10 as a base from which we are working. We are looking for the relationship between the base and a number such as 100. We find that that relationship is expressed by that number <sup>2</sup> raised slightly above the number 10. This little number tells us immediately how 10 is related to 100.

How is 10 related to 1,000? We find that  $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1000$ . We shorten this to say that  $10^3$  is 1,000. That little number <sup>3</sup> to the right and a little raised, but part of the base 10, shows us the relationship between 10 and 1,000. That relationship has a name. We say that 3 is the logarithm of 1,000. Every number has a relationship to 10, although we soon learn that the power of 10 is not always a simple number like 2 or 3.

Suppose, for instance, that we want to find the relationship between 10 as the base and a number like 2000. That number lies somewhere between 100 and 1,000. Therefore the power that 10 must be raised to must be somewhere between 2 and 3, and would look like this:  $10^{2.30103} = 200$ . (2.30103 is said to be the logarithm (log) of 200, and conversely 200 is the antilogarithm (antilog) of  $2.30103$ .)

The number 10 written slightly below the line is called the subscript, and it identifies the base upon

which we have built the logarithmic functions. Actually, any number we like may be used as a base, but 10 is the most convenient number, and the system of logarithms most widely used is called the Common Logarithms. Since this is so well known, we may omit the subscript, and the base 10 is understood. However, if another number is chosen to be the base, it must appear as a subscript to the word Log.

This is mentioned here because there is another base which is not chosen arbitrarily, but it exists in nature, and for this reason: the system of logarithms based upon this number is called the Natural Logarithms. The elite among mathematicians use this base in higher mathematics, and to simplify, it is referred to by the letter  $e$ . There is no need to give the value of  $e$  as it is used in engineering, relativity, nuclear physics, and the like. In this case, however, it is necessary to use the subscript, and the Natural Logarithm of 2 is shown as  $\text{Log}_e 0.6931 = 2$ . It is worth mentioning because difficult problems can be solved quicker than you can say DIFFERENTIAL CALCULUS.

And what is all of this leading to? Well, it seems that wherever we look, we can find lessons from Nature, and is not Nature mathematical throughout her domain? So let us think about what we can learn from logarithms. Any number may serve as a base for its own system, and any other number may be recognized to be a certain power of that base. Why not think that the inmost self of every living thing is the base for its own life, and the number it shows to the world is the power that it has reached, related intimately to its own base? There is no lack of numbers, so we may perceive that every entity is basically its own number. We may call it *swabhāva*, its own 'self-becoming'. Evolution in the theosophical meaning of the word may be thought of as the gradual unfolding of the *swabhāva* of any entity, and when we think of the various kingdoms of Nature, we are seeing Monads that have unfolded themselves to the stage of growth that places it in the kingdom to which it belongs. Wherever that Monad may be, perhaps in a kingdom of nature lower than the human, or may be among the gods, that Base, its *swabhāva*, is a Divinity in the process of unfolding itself through the various kingdoms of Nature. That *swabhāva* has endured, and endured throughout many manvantaras prior to this one—a mystery, truly.

Coming to our own human station in cosmic life, the number that we 'show to the world', as it were, the personality, is after all a certain power we may say of its own basic *swabhāva*. We might reflect upon the thought that this number, representing an individual's outer seeming, may find many others like his own. Could this be one reason why certain groups of people are attracted to the same kinds of activities,

and why close friendships are formed? Who knows but what this is why we can say that upon the death of a close friend, "we may work together in some future life?"

It might add something to human dignity if we realize that as individuals we can understand our own *swabhāvas*, and through our thoughts and acts we can actually aid our Inner Selves in the process of expressing in ever greater degree our own potentialities. It seems worth thinking about.

## A SCENE IN KAMA-LOKA

*Edith L. Wynn*

A gruesome and realistic scene is given by Charles Dickens in one of his short sketches. He called it 'The Ghost of James Barber,' and whether he thought it true or not, it vividly portrays the after-death state which Theosophists call 'Kāma-loka.'

We are introduced to a group of young naval cadets, lieutenants, and middies, drinking and telling their yarns. One, Jovial Jemmy, was mentioned; and his wretched end—he had been dismissed for intemperance and incompetence—called forth many reminiscences of him, their old boon companion, as one who always went to the best dinners and the best balls, knew the latest dances, and all the popular songs. Upon being asked when he had last seen Jemmy, one of the group, Lieutenant Fid, declared that he had seen his ghost.

"It was this way," he said, "I, like yourself, was nearly ruined by love of amusement and intemperance—when he—or whatever else it might have been—came to my aid."

"Let us hear more," they all cried, begging for the ghost story.

"Well, after a round of excitement and dissipation James Barber died, as you know, of a frightful attack of delirium tremens! I was very ill too, and determined after this to work more and play less, but the day I was passed as lieutenant I went the old rounds and accepted all the invitations I could get. My brain was in a whirl. I reconnoitered the ship, thinking I heard my name called, yet could see nobody; but leaning over the side I felt something touch me, and looking around quickly I saw—what seemed to be James Barber. 'Don't be frightened,' he said, 'I won't hurt you. I am only an occasional visitor up here.'

"Where shall we land you?" I asked nervously.

"Oh, anywhere. It don't matter. I've got to be out every night and all night, and the nights are plaguey long just now."

"'Ferd Fid,' continued the voice, 'you recollect how I used to kill time, singing, drinking, and dancing. Fools like yourself thought I was happy, but I wasn't. And now I'm punished fearfully for my sins.'

What do you think I've got to do every night of my—  
“Well, walk the earth, I suppose,” said I.

“No, no, I am condemned to rush about from one evening party and public house to another. At the former I'm bound to dance all the quadrilles with clumsy partners and then eat stale pastry and tough poultry; no sooner let off there than I'm bound to go to some cellar and listen to them singing their songs. Then I must smoke a dozen cigars, knowing what they are made of now—the whole to end each night with unlimited brandy, and eternal intoxication.

“Oh F. F., be warned! Take my advice; keep up your good resolutions and don't do it again. Don't exchange wholesome amusements for debauchery, health for disease and—promise me—nay you must swear.”

“And thus the ghost, picturing his own agony, filled me with such horror for the old life of indulgence that I vowed to him that I would change my ways. And the ghost disappeared.”

Truly thus teaches Theosophy the ancient truth, that *man will be still himself* after he has discarded the body, and will suffer all the lower desires that he has encouraged while in it.

This story gives only one aspect of the states after death; but there are many. The lowest is ‘hell’ indeed: for who can imagine worse horrors than those endured by the vicious criminal and the suicide, revolving continually in their own minds the thoughts and deeds of their lives on earth!

But Kāma-loka is also a purgatory, for as these lower passions are exhausted, the soul is freed to pass on to higher states. All that has been good and beautiful and true in man finds its fruition in the state of Devachan or the Heaven-world. There we are healed of all our sufferings, and in perfect bliss and peace we rest until the hour strikes for our return to the scenes of earth-life.

— *The Theosophical Forum*, Sept. 1936

### THE CHESS GAME

Once upon a time a very unhappy young man went to a remote monastery and said to the abbot: “I am disillusioned with life and wish to attain enlightenment; but I am unable to concentrate on anything very long, and couldn't spend long years in study and meditation. I would lose interest and be drawn back into the world. Is there any hope for a person such as I?”

“Indeed there is,” said the abbot. “Tell me, is there any particular thing that is important to you—that really holds your interest?”

“Well, I suppose there is something that might be called a little important. I have always had a mild interest in chess.”

The abbot thought for a moment and then called

an attendant. When the latter arrived the abbot said: “Tell that old monk who does the fuel-bearing to get his chessboard and men and come here.”

When the old monk appeared, the abbot set up the board and took down from the wall a great sword. “O monk,” he said, “you have vowed obedience to me as your abbot, and now I require it of you. Since you are recognized as a master chess player you will play a game with this youth. If you lose I shall cut off your head with this sword. If you win, the young man will lose his. Chess is the only thing he ever cared about, and therefore if he losses the game he deserves to lose his head as well.”

They began to play. The chessboard became the whole world, and winning the game became the most important thing in the universe. At first the young man had somewhat the worst of it because he was confronted by a brilliant opponent; but then, strangely enough, the latter made an inferior move and the young man was able to launch a strong attack. The monk's position crumbled, and his defeat was certain. The young man looked up into a face of intelligence and nobility, worn with years of austerity and devotion. He thought of his own worthless life, and a wave of compassion came over him. He deliberately made a blunder and then another, ruining his position and leaving himself defenseless.

The abbot reached out and upset the board. “There is no winner and no loser,” he said. “And there is no head to fall.” Turning to the young man he said: “Only two things are required: concentration and compassion. You have today proved that you are capable of both. You were completely concentrated on the game, and you found within your heart compassion that prompted you to sacrifice your life for another. Stay with us and submit to our discipline and training. Your enlightenment is certain.”

— Reprinted from *Messiah*, Summer 1984

### THE MYSTIC STORY OF THE BUDDHA

[Extracts from a Symposium given annually at Point Loma at the time of the Winter Solstice.]

Let us recount the life of the Buddha and what befell unto him on earth, and of the peace he brought to men; and while we thus discourse let us all silently in our hearts reverence the esoteric meaning that lies hidden in this mystical story.

It was the eighth day of the fourth moon of the year 2459 of the Kali-yuga, when springtime dawned full of strange portents, as of some great joy that was to come to men, that the Buddha incarnated in the body of a boy-child, in a town at the foot of the Himalayas. He was born, so says the legend, surrounded with a light like unto the sun that first rises

from the east. Upright and firm and unconfused in mind, he deliberately took seven steps, his footmarks remaining bright as seven stars.

Moving like the lion, king of beasts, and looking earnestly towards the four quarters, penetrating to the core the principles of truth, he spake thus with fullest assurance: "This birth is in the condition of a Buddha; after this I have done with renewed birth. Now only am I born this once, for the purpose of saving all the world."

His father's name was Suddhodana, a word meaning *pure water* or *pure flow*. His mother's name was Maya, illusion. His wife's name Yasodara, meaning the "holder of glory or of splendor." All these names immediately suggest that the entire exoteric story of the Buddha was a symbolic one, showing him to have been born of a mother called 'illusion', and of a male parent called 'pure wave', in other words 'pure inspiration' which is the food of the mind. And his wife's name being 'bearer of Splendor' would signify some great spiritual quality that he possessed and which surrounded him. Every part of the legendary accounts of his life has a basis of esoteric fact.

At his birth the parents, alarmed at the two-and-thirty signs of divine birth that were upon him, and at the amazing wisdom and intellectual power that he manifested, and warned by the wise men of the time, who lived more or less in the spiritual life and light and hence could foresee, tried to hold him to family-life, tried to prevent his inner nature being aroused by the sorrow and sadness of the world.

When the child was somewhat grown, the Rāja summoned the saintly Viswamitra to instruct him in all learning; but the Sage, finding the boy already deeply learned in all the knowledge found in books, and all the traditional lore of planets and of stars, gathered up his books and departed, marveling.

But the day came when Prince Siddhartha must see the four Awakening Sights — namely, an old, bent man; second, a leper, outcast from his kind; and third, a corpse being borne to the funeral pyre; and then again, a Bhigshu of equal mind seeking for that reality which is not transient. Seeing which sights he saddened, and could not rest for brooding on the ills of life, and how mankind could be delivered from old age, sickness, decay, and death, and be led to the final liberation.

So the time finally came when the Buddha within the youth began to show itself clearly; and when that happened, then the awakening came to him even as a young man, after his son Rahula was born. He left his home, went into the Himalayas, tried this discipline and tried that, investigated all things, seeking wisdom, seeking the greater light, withdrawing more

and more into his own inner being, becoming more and more irradiated by the splendor of the divinity within; until one day he sat himself down under the Bodhi-tree, the tree of wisdom, so called because there beneath its branches, final illumination infilled him; and he became a full-blown Buddha.

And as this happened the earth shook with awe, and as it shook the great initiate of Heaven was roused, his eyes filled with joy as they opened to the light. Forthwith he exclaimed: "When formerly I saw the Buddhas of old, there was the sign of an earthquake as now. The virtues of a Muni are so great in majesty that the great earth cannot endure them; as step by step his foot treads upon the ground, so is there heard the sound of the rumbling earth-shaking. A brilliant light now illumines the world, as the shining of the rising sun. Five hundred bluish-tinted birds I see, wheeling round to the right, flying through space. All these auspicious signs are the same as those of former Buddhas; wherefore I know that this Bodhisattva will certainly arrive at perfect wisdom."

But Māra Devarāja, enemy of religion, the Great Deluder, alone rejoiced not. Lord of the five desires, skilled in all the arts of warfare, the foe of those who seek deliverance, he was afflicted, and addressing his daughters thus, said: "The world has now a great Muni. He has taken a strong oath as a helmet. He holds a mighty bow in his hand. Wisdom is the diamond shaft he uses. His object is to gain the mastery in the world, to ruin and destroy my territory. I am myself unequal to him, for all men will believe in him, and all find refuge in the way of his salvation. Then will my land be desert and unoccupied. But as when a man transgresses the laws of morality, his body is then empty, so now, the eye of wisdom being not yet opened in this man, whilst my empire still has peace, I will go and overturn his purpose, and break down and divide the ridge-pole of his house."

Then all the Hosts of Darkness, the Ten Sins, rose like a sea and threatened to engulf him. The demon host waxed fierce and angry, and added force to force, in further conflict. But grasping at stones, they could not lift them; or lifting them they could not let them go. Their flying spears, lances and javelins, stuck fast in space, refusing to descend. The angry thunderdrops and mighty hail with these were changed into five-colored lotus flowers; whilst the foul poison of the dragon snakes was turned to spicy-breathing air. Thus all these countless sorts of creatures, wishing to destroy the Bodhisattva, unable to remove him from the spot, were with their own weapons wounded, and Māra's host was filled with sorrow.

Then in the air the crowd of divine ones, their

forms invisible, raised their voices, saying: "Behold the Great One, his mind unmoved by any feeling of resentment, while all that wicked Mara race are vainly bent on his destruction. Let go your foul and murderous thoughts against that Silent Sage calmly seated! Ye cannot with a breath move the Sumeru mountain. Ye cannot hurt the Bodhisattva, through ages past disciplined by suffering. He shall now certainly attain his end, sitting on this right-established throne as all the previous Buddhas, firm and compact like a diamond."

Māra, hearing these sounds in space, and seeing the Bodhisattva still unmoved, was filled with fear, and again took up his way to heaven above. The mind of the Bodhisattva now reposed peaceful and quiet. The morning sunbeams brightened with the dawn; the dustlike mist dispersing, disappeared; the moon and stars paled their faint light; the barriers of the night were all removed, whilst from above a fall of heavenly flowers paid their sweet tribute to the Bodhisattva.

Then in that sacred hush, behold, a marvel! — for consciousness withdrawn into the Infinite became perception, and the Bodhisattva beheld the vision of past lives, the building and unbuilding of worlds and systems; the long-linked chain of cause and effect stretching from Infinite to Infinite; until he reached at last the unfathomable Source of Truth. As he entered the great Rishi's house (dreamless sleep), darkness disappeared; light dawned. Perfectly silent, all at rest, he reached at last the heart of the Sun, and so, illumined with all Wisdom and bathed in the light of the spiritual Sun, he sat, the twice-born Buddha, whilst one convulsive throe shook the wide earth. The eyes of the Buddha then considered 'all that lives', and forthwith there rose within him deep compassion.

Thereafter he set forth on his pilgrimage over India, teaching, gathering disciples, but always teaching, teaching, teaching. He taught the esoteric Wisdom, then held closely secret by the few Brahmins of his time who knew it. He explained it, developed it, set it forth, and those who were great enough to receive it, and who surrounded the Teacher became the depositaries of his great and sublime system, in so far as he was permitted to communicate it to them.

So the years passed. The stir that he made in the land was great. Pupils flocked to him from every quarter. His name spread far and wide. He performed works of wonder, of human kindness. He taught the gospel of love and compassion and pity, of love without bounds, infinite, taking the Universe within the compass of its reach. He taught the essential, spiritual-divine oneness of all things, the spiritual-

divine oneness of the human being with the spiritual universe. He sent his disciples two by two all over Aryavarta and told them to go farther afield, which did in time.

When the Buddha was eighty years old and autumn was turning the leaves, the legend states that he laid himself down one day, and his last words, according to the Buddhist scriptures, were: "My Brethren, all things are composite. Work out your own salvation with diligence. Walk as I have commanded you. Get rid of all the tangled net of sorrow; walk in the way with steadfast aim. 'Tis not from seeing me this comes; he who does not do what I command sees me in vain, whilst he who lives far off from where I am, and yet walks righteously is ever near me. A man may dwell beside me, and yet being disobedient, be far away from me. Keep your heart carefully; give not place to listlessness; earnestly practise every good work."

And further he said: "Do not believe my work will die with me. It is not one alone who keeps alive a host. Look within. The light enkindled there by the truths and rules of Our Order will lead you on. Be lamps unto yourselves. Proceed with meditation, concentration, and devotion. Weigh carefully all teaching that you meet. If it rings true to the fundamental doctrines laid down for the Brotherhood, then is the teaching good. If it ring not true, reject it."

Then he passed into Nirvāna for a while, and then returned, having made the sublime sacrifice of the individual for the benefit of all. He then lived, but retired from the sight of men, teaching only a few of his chosen Arhats. He went to the Himalayas, to Sambhala, where he took his place in that ancient center of men's inspiration.

The Lord Buddha lived to be one hundred years old as a man, and according to the esoteric legend, when death ensued, the human ego of the Buddha then ascended from the ordinary human consciousness upwards into the spiritual, and touched the Divine. Then it came back again along the pathway of the inner constitution, and the Buddha then opened his eyes. He closed them again, and the same human consciousness ascended a second time through the interior spheres, ever more high, touched or became at one with the Celestial Buddha for a few fugitive instants, and then descended again for the second time, and for the second time, when the brain was reached the Buddha opened his eyes. For the third time the same thing happened. The Mānushya-Buddha then left the lowest principles of his being to fall apart, and himself remained in the astral realms as a Nirmānakāya, with all parts of his constitution excepting only the physical body, the astral body, and the gross animal vitality. On account

of his highly evolved inner constitution there was this self-conscious ascent.

There are many more mysteries, truly wonderful, that might be told about the Buddha. The Buddha *per se* is a spiritual principle, a Ray from the Silent Watcher of the Planet, sometimes called the Celestial Buddha, the Dhyāni-Buddha, and the Great Initiator. When this Ray illuminates a great and noble human being, with all his seven principles who is born on earth as a man, we have the Mānushya-Buddha, a human Buddha. Buddha Siddhārtha was born a man, although a Sixth-Round man, but this Celestial Ray illumined him in much the same way as the Mānasaputras entered the undeveloped Manases of the Third Race and inspired them. The exoteric religion, called Buddhism, which the Lord Buddha taught while he labored in the body among men on earth, is an outer form of the ancient Wisdom-Religion of mankind, and therefore it has been the greatest and noblest of all exoteric religions of historical time.

—[After the above various expressions given by the cast of the Symposium, further teaching was expounded on the difference between Avatāras and the Buddhas; what in ancient time was the real meaning of Initiation, and the disciplinary steps relating thereto; and the duties and attitudes of the chela. The Symposium ended with quotes from *The Voice of the Silence*, and all reciting in Sanskrit the ancient Gāyatri: OM, Bhūr, Bhuvah, Svah!: Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt. — Eclectic Editors]

## DOES CHANCE OR JUSTICE RULE OUR LIVES?

Rosemary Vosse

The following is reprinted from *The Koeksister*, September 1982, a bi-monthly publication from Wynberg, South Africa, "aimed at bringing together people, and especially women, of our three racial groups and speakers of our three principal languages." The title refers to a little book by Nils Amneus (\$2.00) available from Point Loma Publications, Inc. —EDS.

We saw that title on a booklet. It's certainly a challenging question. What do *you* think about it?

In a way, most of us tend to feel that there *is* a higher power keeping an eye on the situation, and that we *are* being cared for. On the other hand, however, people are continually telling each other that they must be careful because, for instance, somebody was shot out of a passing car on our own Main Road recently, or had their car stolen, or their bag snatched in the subway — you know all the hundreds of possibilities there are. . . . If you had to be thinking of all the disasters that *might* happen, you'd surely be a nervous wreck! So what stand should we take?

In times of great stress, like war, it seems that people become very philosophical. We've heard that many of them used to say they would not be blown up by any particular bomb if it didn't have their ticket on it. That seems a wise way of taking things and it does make life easier.

But why *should* we be shot at or blown up or whatever? Is there a reason why these things happen to some people and not to others? We remember those strange words of Jesus about "the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left", referring to two people who are close to each other and in the same circumstances at the same time. It makes us think that there *is* some discriminating power, and that the same fate will not necessarily overtake all people, though their circumstances may appear to be equal.

Is it not possible that the saying is true about the very hairs on our heads being numbered and that as we sow so shall we reap? According to those sayings, it seems that if anything has to happen to you, because it is the effect of a cause you have made, it *will* happen. But if you haven't made that cause, you won't get that effect. This would apply to good effects as much as to bad ones, naturally.

So it's actually quite simple. Let's keep on making good causes, and see how many pleasant things come along. Of course, it won't count if we make the sort of causes that look good, but are actually motivated by selfish ends; that would not be playing the game — and down on us would come the law of cause-and-effect as sure as eggs are eggs — sooner or later.

## V: QUESTIONS — YOUR ANSWERS

This time the subject is one that Theosophy illuminates perhaps above all others, that of Death, its real meaning and significance, the after-death states of consciousness, and what all this reveals in a practical way in our lives here and now. The Manual studied is No. 5: *After Death — What?* by Leoline L. Wright. Again, ask yourself the questions, and then check with the book. —EDS.

### I: INTRODUCTORY

1. What is meant by our Inner Immortal Self, and how can this be related to the problem of Death? (pp. 2-3) (also p. 6)
2. What is consciousness? (pp. 6-7; also p. 55)

### II: SLEEP AND DEATH

1. What are some of the several "states of consciousness"? (pp. 1-12)
2. In what way may man be regarded as a "drop-let of the Universal Life"? (p. 13)

### III: WHY DO WE DIE?

1. What is a main reason why we die? (p. 15)

**III. WHY DO WE DIE? (Continued)**

2. (a) Reviewing what constitutes the Higher Triad, and the Lower Quaternary, what happens to these principles at death? (p. 21)
- (b) What is the 'Second Death'? (pp. 23-24)
- (c) What are kāma-rūpas? (p. 24)
- (d) What is the cause of many spiritistic manifestations? (p. 24)

**IV: DEVACHAN, THE HEAVEN-WORLD**

1. What and where is Devachan? (p. 26; also pp. 33-34)  
What differences exist between the theosophical idea of a heaven-world and the orthodox Christian? (p. 27)
2. In what way is Death a time of dreams? Enlarge on this. (p. 29)
3. What is an approximate time period spent in Devachan? (p. 30)

**V: CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH OUR 'DEAD'?**

1. What is kāma-loka? (p. 35; also p. 49)
2. What is meant by the 'shell' of an excarnate being? (p. 36)
3. What can delay the passage of the Spiritual Self into Devachan? (p. 36)
4. Is it possible for the spirits of the dead, as asserted by Spiritualists, to return to earth? (p. 37, esp. quote from HPB)
5. What does H.P.B. point to as a possible "genuine communion"? (p. 38)
6. How would you explain rare instances of "objective" manifestation after death?

**VI: A GLANCE BACKWARD**

1. What happens in the case of "accidental" or premature death? (pp. 43-45)
2. What is the fate or experience of the suicide? (pp. 46-48)

**VII: DEATH AND THE MONAD**

1. What, 'speaking roughly', is man in relation to a Monad? (pp. 51-52)
2. What, in relation to the Monad, is the purpose of the evolutionary journey? (p. 51)
3. What can you say about "invisible worlds" (Quote from S.D. pp. 54-55)

**VIII: PEREGRINATIONS OF THE MONAD**

1. What part of man's constitution journeys or peregrinates through the inner worlds? (pp. 57-58)
2. Describe that journey (pp. 59-60) and what happens during "Circulations of the Cosmos"? What planets are visited? (pp. 60-63)

**IX: VALUE OF THESE TEACHINGS**

1. What are some of the practical effects in our

lives of an understanding of the after-death teachings? (pp. 65-66)

**X: DEATH AND REBIRTH**

1. What is the process of reincarnation? (pp. 70-71)
2. What are some of the reasons why a study of death is important? (p. 72)
3. What 8 points does the author present in summary of the whole teaching about Death? (pp. 73-74)

**XI: SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

1. Is there a place of eternal punishment in the theosophical scheme of things? Enlarge (pp. 75-76)
2. What is Avichi? (pp. 76-77)
3. Is it possible to shorten the period between earth-lives? Explain. (pp. 78-79)
4. What is the theosophical teaching regarding immortality? (pp. 80-81)

**ESOTERIC MAN: THE AEONS-LONG JOURNEY**

The above is the title of No. 10 of Point Loma Publications Study Series. Just off the press, it is written by Helen Todd, for many years one of the editorial staff at the Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters and later co-editor of *The Eclectic Theosophist*.

The story of Evolution is of perennial interest. Are you a Darwinian evolutionist, or a so-called Creationist? What has Theosophy to say? "But must it be a question," asks the author, "of either-or? Is there not a third alternative — one that would not discredit but would, rather, give fresh significance to the unassailable *facts* that have been gathered by evolutionists; one that would reconcile the principle of a continuous development of living species from primitive to higher types with that of a divinely motivated creativity?" The author then states "Basic Theosophic Principles", and from thence unrolls the grand evolutional picture which Theosophy gives. Chapter titles and sub-titles may give some idea of what we learn.

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|--|----|
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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### *Theosophical Network*

[We reprint in full the following received from the Theosophical Network Committee. — Eds.]

H.P. Blavatsky's writings express in our modern era a basis for comprehending the inherent unity of both universal and human life. This interdependence (as outlined in *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, etc.) is the networked pattern within which we evolve and experience Reality itself. To apply this in practice we are initiating a bi-annual directory to enhance communications, study, interrelating and sharing of ideas, projects, seminars, etc., among individuals within the Theosophical Movement. It will:

- 1) provide the service of listing one's name and address and primary Theosophical interests and projects.
- 2) give a listing of current classes, seminars, and workshops happening throughout the world.
- 3) publish some original previously unpublished or long unavailable material (Blavatsky/Mahatma era related) in each issue.

This directory is intended to be useful for networking a more all-encompassing unity amongst all Theosophists, as well as being a medium of communication to enhance sharing and understanding of Theosophical teachings.

The first issue will be available in January 1985, with issues following every six months. The subscription is \$5/yr. U.S. \$6/yr. foreign. This includes printing, one's, listing and mailing costs.

To help create this networking the following advisory group has come together: Will Ross, Doss McDavid, Rick Nurrie, Ann Redlich, Ken Small, Virginia Ross, Vicente Hao-Chin, Petra van de Stou.

For listing communications write:

Theosophical Network, P.O. Box 3419-83, La Mesa, CA 92041  
(Please give name, telephone number, address, and state theosophical interests.)

### *Further Vindication: HPB, Psychical Research, etc.*

(The following is extracted from the May-June 1984 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist: Notes and Comments* by the General Secretary):

"A friend in London has written to tell me of an interesting lecture heard at the English headquarters of the Society in March. It was given by Dr. Vernon Harrison, a senior member of the society for Psychical Research, although apparently not a member of the T.S. Dr. Harrison recently made a detailed study of the infamous 1885 Hodgson Report 'On Phenomena Connected With Theosophy', and has concluded that there is no evidence to justify Hodgson's accusation that the Mahatma Letters were forged by H.P. Blavatsky. His opinion carries considerable weight inasmuch as his lifetime career has been that of a professional investigator of fraud, including forgery.

"This expert opinion, coming on top of Charles Marshall's syntactic study (C.T., Nov.-Dec. 1980), and the conclusion of the handwriting expert employed by Victor Endersby (*The Hall of Magic Mirrors* p. 160), should convince all but the most biased that the defamations against H.P.B.'s character, which have been repeated in one scurrilous biography after another in the past ninety years or so, have absolutely no foundation."

### *1984 Fall Program at Krotona Institute of Theosophy*

Included are two courses given by Seetha Neelakantan, guest speaker from Adyar where she is Director of the International Center of Theosophical Studies. Her Krotona courses are: "Polarization and Perfection" and "The Occult Science of Mantra". The first is "based on the teachings in the Upanishads and will discuss the eternal play of opposites in the field of manifestation." The second is "an introduction to the scientific basis of mantra, with explanation of the Sanskrit terms used."

Joy Mills continues in "Studies in The Secret Doctrine" examination of topics in Vol. I of that great work, focusing on Stanza VII, dealing with the stages by which the living process gives rise to man's psycho-physical vehicle.

An evening class designed for advanced students already familiar with basic theosophical concepts will focus on studies in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, with Mrs. Virginia Hanson as resource person.

A training program for resident students only will be conducted under the direction of Joy Mills, assisted by Diana Dunningham and John Sameluk. This is "designed to aid member-workers of the T.S. in sharpening skills in leadership, researching and presenting talks, public speaking, publicity techniques, etc."

A five-day seminar will be given by Emily Sellon, whose subject is "Transformative Ideas in Theosophy". Based on the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, this special seminar will "explore the essential principles underlying the theosophical worldview.

Mrs. Sellon is a member of the international Society's General Council, and until recently the National First Vice-President of the T.S. in America.

For full information on these programs one should write to: Krotona Institute, School of Theosophy, 46 Krotona Hill, Ojai, Calif. 93023.

#### **Southern California Federation has Newsletter**

Under the editorship of J. Ekins, President of the Federation, the first of what appears to be a quarterly newsletter started with the Spring-Summer 1984 issue. Its aims are: (a) To stimulate and inspire members to further service. (b) To devise ways and means to further the work of the Theosophical Movement. (c) To hold meetings to increase cooperative efforts. (d) To advise headquarters of local programs and suggest ideas for adoption in the national program. The current issue of 20 pages carries News and Notes of Conferences, Board Meeting Highlights, and has a directory of 16 lodges and centers in the southern California area. It reviews the year's activities, with especial coverage of the West Coast Conference held at Krotona, January 28-29, 1984, where the theme "The Theosophical Movement, Networking for Unity", focused on the Theosophical Movement rather than any one Theosophical Society. Snapshots of speakers and others attending are also given. "A Visit to Toronto Lodge" tells its own story in picture and explanatory commentary. Those interested in receiving copies should write to: Theosophical Society in Los Angeles, 622 North Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90004.

#### **Gift of Geoffrey Barborka Books**

Point Loma Publications has received from the estate of Geoffrey A. Barborka his entire working library of books. These include some 800 theosophical volumes, additional encyclopedias, personal diaries, and memoranda of many years, as well as oil paintings and water color sketches by noted artists. All this constitutes a valued addition to Point Loma Publications Archival collection, and will be particularly treasured in appreciative memory of a staunch and unflagging worker for the Theosophical Cause from his earliest years until his last hours.

#### **The Promised Printed Proceedings of SD<sup>2</sup>**

The printed Proceedings of the first International Symposium on H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, held in San Diego, California, July 21-22, 1984, under the auspices of Continuum Foundation and Wizards Bookshelf, are now available. They include 17 papers from 4 countries: Science, Mythology, Bibliography, Concentric Key, Numbers, Gravity, Translations, World Religions. [110 pages, \$6.00 (9 oz.) Please add postage.] Order direct from: Wizards Bookshelf, P. O. Box 6600, San Diego, Calif.; or through *The Eclectic Theosophist*.

#### **FROM LETTERS RECEIVED**

**J.M., Heemsted, Holland** — We admire the universality of *Eclectic's* articles, which include the ULT, Adyar TS, reviews of important books, Items of Interest, news about conventions, and Letters Received. . . . It all renders the ET an outstanding publication, and makes one feel a unity with theosophists all over the world.

**L.G.K., Roseburg, Oregon** — Really appreciate so much information from such a variety of sources. Thank you.

**M.D.M., Weybridge, England:** The Questions you are printing

month by month in *The Eclectic Theosophist* are of great interest. I am using them to test myself and I wonder if I might send copies of them to people who are studying them on my course. [By all means!] It is good to have to put into one's own words a text that has been studied.

**J.F., Victoria, B.C.** — Please send a copy of the *Eclectic* to -----. I want him to get to know G. de P. who explains Theosophy more clearly than anyone else.

**K.L., Somerville, N.J.** — I really look forward to each issue. There is always something to lift my spirits and feed my mind.

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